

THE
Earl of MU-----AVE's

(Now Duke of Buc—ham)

S P E E C H

I N T H E

House of LORDS,

Since the *Revolution*,

Upon the bringing in a BILL against
admitting Officers to sit in the

House of Commons.

L O N D O N:

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THE

Earl of MURRAY

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SPEECH

IN THE

House of LORDS

Since the Revolution

Upon the petition in 1711 against
admitting Officers to sit in the

House of Commons.

LONDON:

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IN THE
House of LORDS,

Since the Revolution.

My Lords,

THIS Debate is of so great Consequence, that I resolv'd to be silent, and rather to be advis'd by the Ability of others, than to shew my own want of it; besides, it is of so Nice a Nature, that I, who speak always unpremeditatedly, apprehend extremely, saying any Thing which may be thought the least reflecting; though even that ought not to restrain a Man here from doing one's Duty to the Publick, in a Business where it seems to be so highly concerned. I have always heard, I have always read, that Foreign Nations, and all this Part of the World, have admir'd and envied the Constitution of this Government. For not to speak of the King's

Power, here is a House of Lords to advise him on all Important Occasions, about Peace or War; about all Things that may concern the Nation, the Care of which is very much intrusted to your Lordships.

But yet, because your Lordships cannot be so Conversant with the Generality of the People, nor so constantly in the Countrey as it is necessary for that Purpose, here is a House of Commons also chosen by the very People themselves, newly come from among them, or should be so, to represent all their Grievances, to express the true Mind of the Nation, and to dispose of their Money, at least so far as to begin all Bills of that Nature; and if I am not mistaken, the very Writ for Elections sent down to the Sheriffs does empower them to chuse, what? Representatives.

Now, my Lords, I beseech you to consider the Meaning of that Word Representative; if to do any Thing contrary to their Mind, it would be absurd to propose it; and yet how can it be otherwise if they, after their being chosen, change their Dependency, engage themselves in Employments plainly inconsistent with that great Trust reposed in them? And that I will take the Liberty to demonstrate to your Lordships that they now do, at least according to my humble Opinion; I will instance first in the least and lowest Incapacity they must be under who take Employments. Your Lordships know but too well what a general Carelessness there appears every Day more and more in the Publick Business; if so, how is it likely that Men should be as diligent in their Duty in Parliament as that Business requires, where Employments, and a great deal of other Business, shall take up both their Minds and their Time? But then in some Cases it is worse, as in Commands of the Army, and other Employments of that kind, when they must have a divided Duty: For it does admirably become an Officer to sit Voting away Money in the House of Commons,

mons, while his Soldiers are perhaps taking it away at their Quarters for want of his Presence to restrain them, and of better Discipline among them; nay, perhaps his Troop or Regiment may be in some Action Abroad, and he must either have the Shame of being absent from them at such a Time, or from that House where he is intrusted with our Liberties.

To this I have heard but One Objection by a Noble Lord, that if this Act should pass the King is not allowed to make a Captain, or a Colonel, without disabling him to sit in Parliament. Truly, if a Captain has only deserved to be advanced for exposing himself in Parliament, I think the Nation would have had no great Loss in the King's letting alone such a Preferment.

But, my Lords, there is another sort of Incapacity yet worse than this, I mean that of Parliament Mens having such Places in the Exchequer, as the very Profit of them depends on the Money given to the King in Parliament. Would any of your Lordships send and intrust a Man to make a Bargain for you, whose very Interest shall be to make you give as much as he can possibly? It puts me in Mind of a Farce, where an Actor holds a Dialogue with himself, speaking first in one Tune, and then answering himself in another. Really, my Lords, this is no Farce, for it is no laughing Matter to undo a Nation; but it is altogether as Unnatural for a Member of Parliament to ask first in the King's Name for such a sort of Supply, give an Account from him how much is needful towards the Paying such an Army, or such a Fleet, and then immediately give by his ready Vote what he had before asked by his Master's Order.

Besides, my Lords, there is such a Necessity now for long Sessions of Parliaments, and the very Privileges belonging to Members are of so great an Extent, that it would be a little hard and unequal to other Gentlemen, that they should have all the

Places also. All the Objections that have been made may be reduc'd to these.

First, 'Tis told us, that 'tis a Disrespect to the King, that his Servants or Officers should be excluded: To this I desire it may be considered, that 'tis in this Case, as when a Tenant sends up any Body to treat for him. Would any of your Lordships think it a Disrespect; nay, would the King himself think it any, if the Tenant would not wholly refer himself to one of your own Servants, or the King's Commissioners, in the Case of the Crown? And if he chuses rather some plain Honest Friend of his own to supply his Absence here, will any Man blame such a Proceeding, or think it Unmannerly?

Besides, your Lordships know even this Act admits them to be chosen, notwithstanding their Employment, provided the Electors know it first, and are not deceived in their Choice.

All we would prevent is, that Good and Rich Corporations should not chuse, nor intrust, with all their Liberties, a plain Honest Country Neighbour, and find him within Six Months change into a preferred Cunning Courtier, who shall tie them to their Choice, tho' he is no more the same Man than if he were turn'd Papist, which by the Law, as it stands already, puts an Incapacity upon him.

Another Objection is, That this Act may by its Consequence prolong this Parliament, which they allow would be a very great Grievance, and yet suppose the King capable of putting it upon us, which I have too much Respect for him to admit of; I am glad however that it is objected by Privy-Councillors in Favour, who consequently, I hope, will never advise a Thing which they now exclaim against as so great a Grievance.

But pray, my Lords, what should tempt the King to so ill a Policy? Can he fear a Freedom of Choice in the People, to whose Good-will he owes all his Power, which these Lords suppose he may use to their Prejudice?

And

And therefore give me leave to say, as I must not suspect him of so ill a Design as the Perpetuating this Parliament, so he cannot, he ought not, to suspect a Nation so intirely, I was going to say, fondly devoted to him.

My Lords, no Man is readier than myself to allow that we owe the Crown all Submission, as to the Time of calling Parliaments according to Law, and appointing also where they shall sit. But with Reverence be it spoken, the King owes the Nation entire Freedom in chusing their Representatives; and it is no less his Duty, than it is his true Interest, that such a just and fair Proceeding should be used towards us.

Consider, my Lords, of what mighty Consequence it may be, that so many Votes should be free, when upon one single one may depend the whole Security or Loss of this Nation. By one single Vote such a Thing may happen, that I almost tremble to think: By one single Vote a General Excise may be granted, and then we are all lost; by one single Vote the Crown may be impower'd to name all the Commissioners for raising the Taxes, and then surely we should be in a fair Way towards it. Nay, whatever has happened may again be apprehended; and I hope those Reverend Prelates will reflect, that if they once grow Obnoxious to a Prevalent Party, one single Voice may be as dangerous to that Bench as a general Dissatisfaction among the People, proved to be one in a late Experience. Which I am far from saying by Way of Threatning, but only by a Way of Caution.

My Lords, we may think, because this concerns not the House of Lords, that we need not be so over careful of the Matter; but there are Noblemen in *France*, at least such as were so before they were enslaved, who that they might domineer over others, and serve a present Turn perhaps, let all Things alone so long till the People were quite mastered, and the Nobility themselves too, to bear them Company. So

So that I never met a *Frenchman*, even of the greatest Rank, (and some had 10000 Pistoles a Year in Employments,) that did not envy us here for our Freedom from that Slavery which they groan under; and this I have observed Universally, except just Monsieur *de Louvors*, Monsieur *Colbert*, or such People, because they were the Ministers themselves who occasioned these Complaints, and thrived by the Oppressions of others.

My Lords, this Countrey of ours is apt to be provoked, we have had a late Experience of it; and tho' no Wise Man but would bear a great deal rather than make a Bustle, yet really the People are otherwise, and at any Time change a present Uneasiness for any other Condition, tho' a worse; we have known it so too often, and sometime repented it too late.

Let them not have this new Provocation, in being debarred from a Security in their Representatives. For malicious People will not fail to insinuate into their Minds, that all those vast Sums which have been, and still must be, raised towards this War, are not disposed in so fair a Manner as ought to be, and I am afraid they will say their Money is not given, but taken.

However, whate'er Success this Bill may have there must needs come some good Effect of it; for if it passes it will give us Security, if it be obstructed it will give us Warning.

F I N I S.

